

Message Text

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46

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SUBJ: ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS: ALLEGATIONS BY MEXICAN CONSUL GENERAL

1. NOVEMBER 18 MEXICO CITY PRESS WIDELY REPORTED ALLEGATIONS MADE BY MEXICAN CONSUL GENERAL AT EL PASO, FERNANDO FERNANDEZ ARINA, CONCERNING "ILLEGAL" PROBLEM. ALTHOUGH ACCOUNTS VARY SOMEWHAT, FERNANDEZ IS GENERALLY QUOTED AS HAVING CHARGED INS AND BORDER PATROL WITH GROSS MISTREATMENT OF MEXICAN ILLEGALS. ACCORDING TO EL HERALDO, HE WENT SO FAR AS TO SAY THAT EVERY APPREHENDED MEXICAN WOMAN "ILLEGAL" WAS (IS) RAPED AND BEATEN. FERNANDEZ (ACCORDING TO EXCELSIOR VERSION) SAID THAT US AUTHORITIES HAVE NOT RESPONDED TO A SINGLE PROTEST CONCERNING ALLEGED MISTREATMENT. BOTH EXCELSIOR AND EL DIA STATE THAT GOM CONSIDERING PRESENTATION OF FORMAL NOTE OF PROTEST.

2. IN DISCUSSING FIGURES, FERNANDEZ REPORTEDLY STATED THAT EXPULSION RATE DURING FY 72 REACHED CLOSE TO THE HALF MILLION MARK. ACCORDING TO EXCELSIOR, FERNANDEZ STATED THAT MEXICAN AUTHORITIES ARE POWERLESS TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT "ILLEGAL" SITUATION SINCE "ILLEGAL ACTION IS COMMITTED ON US TERRITORY". BLAME FOR EXISTING ILLEGAL PROBLEM VARIOUSLY PLACED ON US EMPLOYERS WHO SEEK CHEAP LABOR (NOVEDADES AND EXCELSIOR) AND ON ALLEGATION THAT BILATERAL

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VISA TREATY HAS BEEN BROKEN AT BEHEST OF ORGANIZED LABOR (EL DIA).

3. ALL ACCOUNTS QUOTE FERNANDEZ AS HAVING CALLED FOR EARLY NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TOWARD CONCLUSION OF A NEW BRACERO AGREEMENT.

4. COMMENT: FERNANDEZ' STATEMENTS SEEM TO HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY PLANNED. THEY WERE MADE IN A COLLECTIVE INTERVIEW WITH MEXICO CITY JOURNALISTS; EL NACIONAL, EXCELSIOR, EL HERALDO AND NOVEDADES WRITERS OF RESPECTIVE ARTICLES ALL IDENTIFIED AS "SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS" (WHO MAY HAVE BEEN IN EL PASO IN CONNECTION WITH CHAMIZAL CEREMONIES). GIVEN GOM-RECOGNIZED SENSITIVITY OVER THIS ISSUE AND HIGH-LEVEL CONCERN, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT CONSUL GENERAL WOULD HAVE MADE STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM WITHOUT FIRST HAVING CLEARED THEM WITH FONSECRETARIAT. EMBASSY WILL ENDEAVOR TO VERIFY ACCURACY OF REPORTED STATEMENTS, AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANY SIMILAR EFFORTS WHICH CAN BE MADE BY DEPARTMENT OR INS EL PASO. IN MEANTIME, AMBASSADOR INTENDS TO RAISE THESE SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS WITH FONSECRETARY RABASA. IF FERNANDEZ CORRECTLY QUOTED AND IF HE CAN SUBSTANTIATE HIS STATEMENTS, CORRECTIVE ACTION BY USG CLEARLY IS IN ORDER. CONTRARILY, IF HE HAS MADE STATEMENTS WHICH CANNOT BE SUPPORTED, EMBASSY PLANS TO PRESS GOM FOR PUBLIC CLARIFICATION AND, AS APPROPRIATE, RETRACTION.

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